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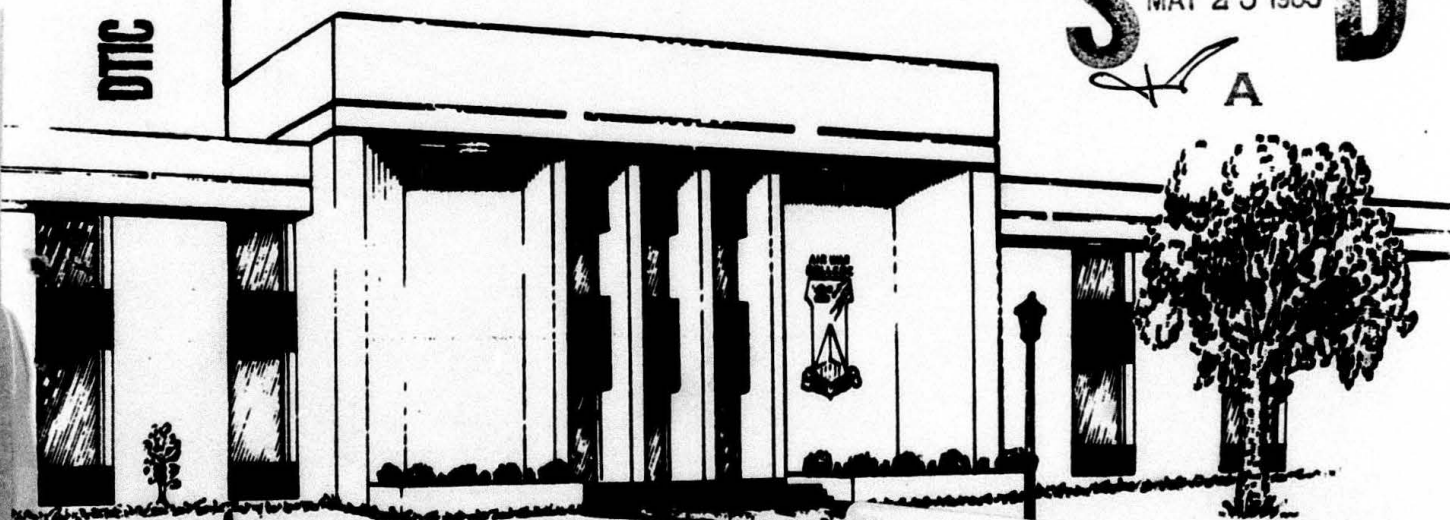
MILITARY RETIREMENT:  
DREAM OR DILEMMA FOR AIR FORCE CHAPLAINS

By CHAPLAIN, LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES W. MILLSAPS

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AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

MILITARY RETIREMENT

Dream or Dilemma for Air Force Chaplains

by

James W. Millsaps, [REDACTED]  
Chaplain, Lt Col, USAF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH  
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ROBIE HACKWORTH, Colonel, USAF  
Dean, School of Resident Programs

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This research report represents the view of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Air War College or the Department of the Air Force.

This document also represents a special project in which a subject related to the Air Force chaplaincy, having been approved as an appropriate subject by the Air War College and the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, USAF, can be used to satisfy the Military Studies Program requirement.

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## PREFACE

The Chinese use symbols instead of words. For the word "crisis" they use two symbols. One means "danger" and the other means "opportunity." There is an interesting parallel in these symbols and the title of this paper: MILITARY RETIREMENT--DREAM OR DILEMMA FOR AIR FORCE CHAPLAINS. Retirement for many chaplains may well mean a "dream" or opportunity, while for others it represents "dilemma" or dangers.

The purpose of this study is to ascertain to some degree how much of the retirement/transition experience is dream and how much is dilemma. The study is limited in scope--a limitation by design in that time constraints prevented extensive investigations. In all probability, it will raise more questions than it will answer. Nevertheless, some questions and concerns will be clearly indicated and some possible answers will be offered in the conclusion.

No attempt was made to "weigh" the data nor to make comparisons of one religious denomination with another--especially in terms of the role the endorsing agents have or the role the chaplains expect them to have. Church structure, in some cases, is reflected and must be addressed in fairness to each participant and each denomination represented in the study. For the most part, I have tried to let the chaplains and endorsers speak for themselves.

Four active duty chaplains made helpful suggestions to improve the inquiry form which was mailed to active and retired chaplains. Special thanks to Chaplain, Colonel Jerry Mallory, and Lt Col Bill D. Dendinger, chief and team member respectively of the USAF Chaplain's Resource Board, Maxwell AFB, AL, and Chaplain, Colonel Dan Franks, and Chaplain, Lt Col Hal Jensen, Commandant and faculty member respectively, USAF Chaplains School, Maxwell AFB, AL. Finally, I am grateful to Chaplain, Lt Col Gilbert Beeson, team member, Chaplain's Resource Board, for his aid and assistance in providing to me several very good resource materials.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

It seemed natural to contact the retired chaplains when asking questions about retirement. For the purposes of this study, I felt it was equally as important to contact some active duty chaplains. It was decided to contact only those with 20 years or more active duty time. There were 125 who met that criterion. They ranged in rank from major to major general. The response rate was 66 percent.

Surely, the "voice of experience" is important as you attempt to come to grips with feelings, disappointments, and present job activities. I chose 112 retired chaplains to be the recipients of the inquiry forms. That number represents the number of chaplains whom I know and/or have met in chaplain meetings throughout my own career. I chose them hoping that the personal contact would encourage a better response. The actual rate was 57 percent.

Personal letters were mailed to both active and retired chaplains with handwritten notes added to each. Also, the chaplain received a postage-paid, addressed envelope for the form to be returned to the Chaplains Resource Board at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

The following denominations are represented in the retired chaplains' responses: Roman Catholic, 13; Baptist, 16; United Methodists, 14; Disciples of Christ, 3; Lutheran, 6; Christian Church, 1; Presbyterian, 3; Reformed Church of



American, 1; First Congregational Church, 1; United Church of Christ, 1; Episcopal, 1; and Eastern Orthodox, 1. I did not attempt to identify active duty chaplains by their religious affiliation in that it did not suit the purposes of this particular study. The vast majority of the active duty chaplains granted permission to reflect their names in an appendix which would show them as contributors. However, of those granting permission, at least one-third signed their names with such illegible writing that time constraints prevented the madness in deciphering other codes, i.e., zip codes, postal marks, personal notes, etc., in an effort to determine just who gave me permission to include their name.

After trying to analyze the above dilemma and realizing that I had not specifically asked for such permission from the retired force, I have elected to thank each active duty chaplain by personal note and those retired in this writing. No names are therefore acknowledged. Let it be emphatically stated that this project would never have been completed had it not been for the excellent response which I received from my fellow chaplains. I am grateful. But more importantly, I hope that the Chaplain Corps, the religious endorsers, and churches alike will profit from the insights which are candidly shared in this study.

Each participant was guaranteed confidentiality in their remarks. A few were terribly bland. The vast majority were candid, upfront, and principally insightful to what some

chaplains really think about "retirement"--both prior to the experience and after the event.

A third part of this study consists of the role of the endorsers in the retirement process. The Office of the Chief of Chaplains, USAF, provided the complete mailing list of fifty-one endorsing agents. Letters were mailed to all of them. Nineteen responded. The responses of the endorsees varied as much as did the "expectations" of the active duty chaplains. The pros and cons of this relationship will be developed more completely in the appropriate chapter.

At the time of this writing, there were no women chaplains in the retired ranks nor in the active duty force with time beyond twenty years. Based on this fact, the masculine gender is used.

## CHAPTER II

### WHERE ARE WE NOW--Active Duty

Words mean different and contrary things to different people. "Retirement" means some very different things to chaplains--both active and retired. A special effort was made to let the chaplains know they were to respond within the realms of their own understanding. In his book, The Sociology of Retirement, Robert Achley says:

Retirement is a condition in which an individual is forced or allowed to be and is employed less than full-time (at least ever that may mean in his particular job) and in which his income is derived at least in part from a retirement pension earned through prior years of service as a job holder. . . . For example, many career military personnel leave the service only to begin another full-time job. Thus while these people draw pensions and receive other retirement benefits, they are not retired in the least.<sup>1</sup>

Another writer, Joseph Buckley says,

The modern idea calls for retirement to a new life rather than retirement from life. When a person retires now, he simply changes to a new occupation or a new career in which he<sub>2</sub> can continue to grow in personal value and usefulness.<sup>2</sup>

Alan Sheldon describes retirement in a more biological setting when he says,

Retirement is usually a consequence of aging, indeed of having reached a certain age. The event may hasten or retard the aging process, which is both biological and social. The role loss involved in retirement may well be generally overestimated, and working too long may indeed be unfavorable to health, although some studies show that it is still better than not working. While biology determines the aging process, social factors provide much latitude within it for variation--for example, the presence or absence of social supports.<sup>3</sup>

Most chaplains interviewed viewed the military retirement as transitional, just another phase in life. As one chaplain said, "Just another PCS (permanent change of station)."

Volumes have been written on retirement for women at age 62 and/or for men at age 65. Very little material seems to deal with the man who retires at mid-life, age 48 to 55, and who has several fruitful working years ahead. Active duty chaplains were asked to anticipate what they thought the retirement experience would be like.

In response to the question "I have given some thought to retirement and am wondering about the following: How will I take the transition from military to civilian life?", the responses could be divided into five major areas of expectation. One chaplain said, "Terrible question--how does one know till in the experience?" About 40 percent welcome the possibility and look forward to the retirement/transitioning experience as a very positive direction. For example, "I welcome the transition to a broader and productive ministry with maximum use of potential." "I'll take a month to get settled and then go to work." "Very well! No problem that I can foresee. The change will be exciting. The Air Force chaplaincy has been great, but there's a lot to do elsewhere." "Smoothly, I hope. I have a permanent home. I have earned a doctorate in Human Development counseling which gives me some interesting options. My family is grown so there will be no

heavy financial obligations." "I intend to retire at approximately 27 years of service and settle in Hayneville, Alabama. At this point, I hope to be adequately prepared for transition into specialized ministry. . ." The next group of chaplains seem happy and full of joy over the possibilities of future ministries. They say, "I have happy and content thoughts as I look forward to the transition." "Very easily for me--I was able to have a follow-on assignment to. . ., to register in my own area, and after a six months' leave of absence will be accepting a pastoral appointment in the . . . of my church." A priest adds, "I expect no problems--will be welcome in my diocese." Another added, ". . . with anticipation and excitement of a new phase of ministry,"

Some responded with vigor. For example: "GREAT. Many options for me to grow beyond what the present form of the Air Force chaplain service offers. . ." "I do not anticipate serious problems in making the transition. The greatest problem, I think, will be making the break from the daily excitement of base and chapel activities,"

In spite of some things not working as perhaps the chaplains had hoped they would, they are still positive about the future. One such chaplain says, "I foresee no real problems and am not traumatized by the idea of retirement. I've thoroughly enjoyed ministering in the chaplaincy despite problems, politics, passovers, and poor assignments. I do not nor have I ever felt trapped by military service or its benefits.

I am looking forward to several more years of service to be sure, but upon retirement I think I will be able to leave the Air Force looking forward to continuing the ministry in the civilian community." How is this for a positive expectation? "I expect to take many rich contributions and growth experiences from the military ministry into civilian church functions; i.e., multiple ministries, team work, administrative procedures, etc." Another chaplain feels God is already leading him in a specific direction. He says, "My transition should be an easy one. For a number of years, I have felt the Lord's leadership into rural ministry after my military service. Since I am a country boy, it should not be difficult."

Some chaplains have made special efforts to keep in touch with their peers back home. One chaplain indicated, "I have little or no apprehension/dread about the transition. I have kept relatively close contact with my chronological peers in my denomination and home area. I feel sure I will find as much work as I'll be able to do." Other chaplains relate transitioning to the civilian community to the "will" of God; i.e., "I will make the transition when I feel God wants me to minister in another way. Therefore, the transition should be easy. If I make it without God's leading, it will probably be difficult." "Happily, . . . As part of a life-long journey and with gratitude to God that I have lived this long. I will enjoy the fruits of the past and rest a while on a plateau--looking around and forward to new experiences."

Finally, there are some chaplains who, when they cut the cord, intend to cut it completely. The following comment best summarizes this notion: "I have sworn on a stack of Yiddish Korans that I would not darken the door of a military chapel, hang around old staff offices, pop in on old/former colleagues or make any but social contacts. The saddest thing in the world is to see retired chaplains who can't let go of it. I saw it again and again at . . . and at . . . . There must have been a dozen such 'visitors' (always with hidden agendas) to. . . . Once I walk out the gate, Sweetie, that is it."

Another 30 percent of the active duty chaplains express feelings of "not sure" or they have some reservations about the future retirement experience. Achley says,

Numerous factors influence the way an individual approaches retirement. To begin with, his commitment to his job governs how he feels about leaving it. A small number of people have crafts or professions which become a way of life; others view their jobs as a pleasant job not all-consuming aspect of their lives. And still others see their jobs as a necessary evil.

One chaplain said, "Not sure. My biggest question is, what should I do? If I planned to go into the pastorate, I think it should be rather simple. I am not planning to complicate it. . . ." Another added, "I'll be 60 years old when I retire, after what will then be 28 years of active duty. There will be some difficult things to adjust to as a priest; perhaps not being able to share my home (rectory) with my relatives and friends as I have been able to do the years I

have been in the Air Force. The relative freedom to come and go and let the airmen/secretary know where I am, or where I can get paged on the pager. . . closeness to my parishioners . . . ." Another priest adds, "There will be some difficulties, i.e., probably drastic change of lifestyle in returning to communal arrangements of a rectory after 25 years of living alone."

A very candid, analysis response is as follows: "With difficulty. The military chaplaincy has been fun. Also, I and my family have few concerns for health care, salary, homes, etc. In many ways, it has been 'warm' in the military family, and it may be 'cooler' outside. I have not used my time to become trained in real estate, marriage and family counseling, financial management, etc., in order to change careers. The Air Force trained me in hospital chaplaincy at Duke Medical Center. At heart I am a pastor with a lot of hobbies. I guess I'll try to do a little traveling, look for a small church or hospital, take part-time pastoral jobs, and enjoy life. My hobbies and a lake cabin and such will be used."

Several chaplains view this next adventure in life as a whole new ball game. "I experience some difficulty in trying to project myself into a retired mode. There seems to be no continuity from active duty to retirement. I anticipate there will be some identity problems and a need to clearly define an internalized concept of self-worth apart from role, rank and salary level."



After 30 years in the military one chaplain says, "I have some anxiety about lifestyle after retirement. This springs from the complete identification with the military lifestyle after 30 years." And another adds, "Because of my age, I feel I will have difficulty. I will be 62 on my retirement date in 1984, with 31 years plus of military service and 6 years parish ministry. After many years of a very satisfying career and ministry in the Air Force, what will happen when . . . ?" "This has occupied my mind much. After 28 years of full, satisfying ministry how can I adjust to a denominational versus an interfaith ministry?"

What might happen in terms of church position? "I sometimes fantasize it as a downward move. It has taken many years to reach a highly respected level--I can't imagine going 'out' and 'up'. Perhaps starting over at the bottom of something else." For 10 years I worked toward becoming a chaplain and for 30 years I have been a chaplain. Forty years in one direction and its a whole new ball game." Some chaplains, especially those who have given nearly 30 years of their ministry to the Air Force community, reluctantly look at the future. They say, "The Air Force has been and is a way of life as well as an avenue for ministry. Both have been exceedingly rewarding. Transition will be a process during which orientation to civilian life will result in involvements and experiences that will replace those found in the Air Force." There is a certain fear in the following offering: "It

frightens me. Four years of civilian work, 26 military years to this date. I love the discipline, the demands, the needs of this life. I need that. TDY's (temporary duty assignments) and schools have never interested me. I want to have an active parish. No need for me to be the BOSS. (his caps) I need the people to need me."

What about the protective umbrella of controls often found in the military? One chaplain says in response to how he thinks he will respond, "With much more stress than I thought I would, as this phase of one's life already contains an inherited stress. And then changing lifestyles after living under the umbrella of controlled, protective institution means a major crisis." "The chaplaincy is an ordered and dynamic way of life. The civilian ministry looks fractured and provincial--transition might be too overwhelming." Another talks of his mixed emotions in regard to this subject. He says, "With some mixed emotions. The Air Force family has been significant in my life because of the many support systems that are available. More people have made significant contributions to my life than I would like to admit; this is especially true within the context of the chapel family. However, the challenge that is before me--the opportunities to explore new dimensions of ministry in the civilian sector certainly reduces the anxiety of the unknown." Finally, one chaplain had some health problems. This seemed to prompt him to think more in the direction of retirement. "Since

having a heart attack two and a half years ago, I've given considerable thought to this subject. Whenever I make the transition, it will be with the knowledge that I've given my best and my all. I'll be ready for the change--'I think.'" How then might chaplains cope with some of the concerns as expressed by these chaplains? One respondent said, "I have started making decisions about what things are most important; i.e., location, kind of job, no job, ministry, or another, etc. Once these are prioritized, transition becomes easier."

A number of chaplains have decided to make certain, sure plans for coping. They are definite in their ideas and apparently feel that such planning will help in the transition. One says, "I plan to use a year of my G.I. bill in a degree program--to soften the impact." "I will either go into a local church, mission staff, or back to school. I have a DMIN and would like to get a PhD if the local church opportunity is not open,"

Does one's sense of calling have anything to do with perspective? "I think it depends on my mind set. If it is positive, I won't have a problem. If it isn't, I will. Ordination vows, with a real sense of calling, is the answer." "In the (church), I am still eligible for appointment and plan to return to my home area for that purpose." "Primarily by completing a master's program, I've started at a local ministry." Another adds, "I hope it will be smooth. . . we live nearly in (city). In October of '83, I will no longer report for duty at (base, USA)."

One underlying theme which has clearly come across from many chaplains is the recognition of the fact that the "visibility" will not be what it use to be. For some, that may be a problem. For others, it will be the delight of their ministry. "The utilization level of my expertise (resulting from training and experience) will be considerably reduced. My visibility will also drop to a more manageable level. The tension headaches should be less frequent (I mean actual physical pain)."

More often than not, the following comments reflect what a lot of Protestant chaplains face at retirement--college-age children. "My problem is that I have told my wife we would pursue her career with the same zeal she has followed me. Unfortunately, we are at a high expense period with two in college and one to go in three years. I would like to get a church and pastor it, but I must wait until my wife gets settled before I can shop around for a church. I am looking at a limited availability of churches because we will need to live near my wife's job. I expect the transition to be a year period of adjustment."

A final group of chaplains are very hesitant about the future. They expect to make the transition very slowly or they have not or are not willing to entertain the possibility of retirement from the military. One says, "He would approach it very slowly. I hope to have a church or other employment prior to separation. This may or may not eventually

happen. It is an anxiety-producing experience, a change to an unknown although not unfamiliar function." "Will I ever be satisfied to stay in one place longer than three years?"

On the other hand, "My thought was never about retiring but how to continue on active duty. The new personnel actions (DOPMA) and promotion changed that for me." "I have not thought about retirement (September of '87). I will make the necessary changes as I have done in all assignments." "I am not certain when I will retire. Most likely it will be before the mandatory date. I plan definitely to go to school for a year in transition." "Little thought to date. I would like to teach in areas of adult development and/or world history with emphasis on the Middle East."

A key notion in all these comments is job identity. People, including chaplains, find great meaning in what they do. Sooner or later, each person in the military will have to retire--chaplains included. Each of us wants and needs to be identified with a job. Mrs. Geneva Mathiasen, the executive secretary of the National Council on the Aging, says,

What we get from a job in our culture is identity. And this holds true for the welder just as it does for the doctor. In every social conversation that exceeds three minutes, it is inevitable that some one will ask you, 'What do you do?'<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the ministry is one of those professions that does in fact have continuing life-long implications. When asked the question, "Will I stay in the parish ministry? Why or why not?", over 70 percent say they intend to stay in the

parish ministry. (See Chapter II for the percent of retired chaplains who are continuing in the ministry in all its forms.) For those who indicate "yes," the following responses are typical: "Yes. If my health is good, I will want to continue working, and there is a marked shortage of priests in my diocese." "I plan to stay in the parish ministry and to serve where I am appointed." "Yes, as a priest, I look forward to serving the church in a civilian community." "Yes, I anticipate going into parochial ministry and have so indicated to my bishop. My years of experience and a degree of financial independence provided by pension benefits may even facilitate this." "I will stay in the parish ministry if that is where my bishop assigns me. Why? Because that is my area of expertise and my calling." "It depends on the bishop's wishes." "Probably, yes. I enjoy parish ministry; there is a growing need for parish priests in my home diocese, and the bishop will probably request it. However, he may offer other options, a chaplaincy or administrative position." "Yes, with projected Catholic clergy shortages, I should be kept busy."

Opinions change as age comes on. One chaplain caught the idea when he said, "I have always said, 'Anyone not returning to the local church is not much of a chaplain.' Now I am not quite so opinionated. The demands made on a civilian pastor just may prove more than a 50-year old is willing to give." Another chaplain says, "Yes, I like it (the parish ministry). I read the Bible regularly, God speaks to me through it. I

enjoy sharing it with others. I also feel my gifts are best suited to parish work."

Other chaplains are willing to get back in the local parish but do not wish to have a full-time pastor position. "The appeal of the parish ministry is strong and I am challenged by that, but am not sure I want the full scope of the parish ministry. Serving on a large staff either in a leadership role or as a member of the staff has an appeal. I am not anxious for a solo ministry." Another one dreams of a multiple-staff job as he says, "Yes, probably in a multiple-staff parish. Because my basic self-concept is that of pastor. One possibility is as the minister of family life, and with some preaching, teaching and counseling, but largely responsible for developing a comprehensive program of family life education, marriage and family enrichment, etc.--all centered in the religious education area and activities of the faith community." Probably part-time. I do not wish to continue in a full-time ministry. I hope to be used as interim and supply pastor for several smaller congregations." One chaplain is emphatic in his position: "I will not be a full-time pastor--will supply, conduct workshops and assist small churches and work with local community outreach through home and hospital visitations. I will also conduct devotionals through the local radio station."

What may suit one chaplain probably will not suit another. It is an individual thing and comes out very clearly

in terms like "I will if I can find a suitable call. I don't necessarily need to be senior pastor. I would be willing to work in a team ministry."

There is an overwhelming sense of "calling" among the chaplains. Time and time again, this expression is used not only to refer to the local civilian parish ministry but also it is used to refer to other types of ministry in the church. One chaplain talks in terms of both local church relationship and the extended parish ministry. "My choice would be to continue in the 'parish ministry.' However, God calls us into ministry within the traditional 'parish' as well as the 'extended' parish which often provides a greater ministry to people than we would normally expect. I was 'called to' and 'ordained for' ministry within the church. That is where my heart really is." Another endorses that by saying, "This has been my calling and source of personal satisfaction/fulfillment." And again we hear, "I hope to stay in the parish ministry. That is what I was called to do, have done and enjoyed tremendously in the past and look forward to doing once I retire from the military." A personal sense of conviction is shared in this comment: "Absolutely, I feel compatible with it. . . I need to preach, to visit the sick, to talk to the young, to be a marriage counselor. I do not feel that any other job would satisfy me." And finally, one chaplain sums it up by saying, "Yes. . . that is where the action is."

Several chaplains did express reserve in terms of pastoring, not for reasons of not wanting to per se, but



because they are not sure of the "need" for them in their particular denomination. For example, "I expect to continue being a pastor in civilian life; however, since there is an abundance of clergy in my denomination and I have been out of circulation all these years, there probably will not be a full-time pastorate available for me."

Numerous chaplains expressed concern over the change in forms of relationships, the demands of a full-time pastorate, long hours and low pay. "I don't know," says one senior chaplain. "I might like to have a small parish or be an associate minister in a larger church. I don't want to be in a 'pressure cooker'; on the other hand, I don't know what else (beside ministry) I am equipped for." "If God calls me there. The pros of that are fulfillment/experience in it. The cons are low pay and long hours." "The civilian pastorate has just recently begun to look attractive to me again, but while I don't rule it out, I think I'd prefer a position heavy on preaching, teaching and light on administration and promotion." One concluding thought in terms of civilian versus military is best stated as follows: "I will return to the local church (parish) ministry. This is where my heart is. . . it is not really different from the real, authentic military chaplaincy in the USAF."

One of the more interesting areas of concern in this paper is the notion that some military chaplains might well be stereotyped, pigeon-holed, or thought of as "once a chaplain,

always a chaplain." The responses to this question, "How will my fellow parishioners view my return to the civilian ministry--Do you think they may have you stereotyped?", fall into five major areas. First, the Catholic chaplains by a 90 percent margin felt that there would be no problems at all. Perhaps the structure of the Catholic community is such that as the Catholic Church gathers in any arena to celebrate Mass the church is the church, and truly the props are only different, i.e., local building in contrast to a military chapel.

Some of the Catholic responses are typified by "My bishop and fellow pastors welcome my return to the civilian ministry." "I see no difficulty or stereotyping at this time. Most Catholics still perceive a Catholic chaplain in uniform as a priest first and foremost. . . who will eventually be back in civilian garb." "Over the years I've participated in the life of the local parish where and whenever possible. I have never felt stereotyped so can anticipate no problems along these lines." "I do not believe I will be stereotyped. A number of diocesan bishops have already indicated they would be delighted to have me."

One might ask "How much of our acceptance in the civilian church/parish relationships is independent on the continuing relationship between the military chaplains and the local parish during the time the chaplain is on active duty?" One priest puts it this way: "From my experience in offering Mass and preaching in the civilian churches, they have been

delighted to have me and my viewpoints expressed to them. It is refreshing to have a military priest speak to the civilian congregations--they love it." And finally, "I am certain many will have us stereotyped. Last summer on leave, I celebrated Sunday Mass in a civilian parish and was introduced by the pastor. . . after Mass, one participant said, 'I knew you had to be in the service; no other priest would have his shoes shined like that. . . .' This doesn't worry me."

The reaction from the Protestant chaplains for the most part was quite different. A small number, all with 25 years plus active duty and with the rank of colonel, responded with a "so-what" feeling that says "I will make it." For example, "Don't know, don't care. What difference does it make. Stereotypes are dangerous, often misleading. Why contemplate someone's ignorance." He might just have a real point in this reaction. Another added: "Possible stereotyped, but I don't care. I am willing to work at breaking that tendency however--where it really matters. I've never felt particularly 'typical' although I've not gone out of my way to be anything close to 'way out.'" A third group seemed to say they felt there would be some stereotyping, but it would be another challenge to "prove" themselves in and/or it might just to be more positive than negative. "There will obviously be stereotypes, but that should not be either a permanent impediment or advantage. All we ask is for the opportunity to show our willingness and ability to serve." "Yes, some

persons stereotype, but I haven't let that stop me in my ministry anywhere else. . . so I will not stop when I retire. This year I was offered two churches if I would get out. I was tendered two other type jobs, both with ministry as the main thrust." "I think we may have overplayed the chaplain stereotype theme. My impression is that many of my mature contemporaries will give me an honest appraisal."

A fourth group talk of the opportunities to get involved, to speak, and in some cases chaplains have been encouraged to retire from active duty and accept a local church call. "I have had two calls to become a civilian pastor in the last four months. These lay people want the experience of a chaplain to lead their congregations." "Based upon my experience in churches that I have preached for and taught in (there have been many), I believe I will be well received. I have never felt I was stereotyped," "I have been told on occasions that I had to prove myself. I am looking forward to fellowship in a local church with supply work. I am not worried." "Stereotyping fades if you love parishioners as they get to know you and accept your caring."

Perhaps the following chaplain best sums up the positive expectations which many chaplains have in relationship to their future in civilian churches: "I feel that my fellow parishioners will view my return to the civilian ministry as their gain. Being in the military, they perceive me as having vast experiences and not as provincial. I do not believe that

I will find myself stereotyped since I never put too much weight on being in the military and have refused to be ghetto-nized or be boxed in. I think being stereotyped has much to do with one's perception of his own self-image or worth."

One is made to wonder if the real question is not "How do we accurately interpret to the civilian community (churches) the mission and ministry of the military chaplains?" Some chaplains expressed that as follows: "I have found it difficult to interpret experiences to civilians. They frequently have a 'Beatle Bailey' or 'Mash' concept." "I think 'they' would be glad to see me back in civilian ministry. They may have some misconceptions as to how a chaplain would relate with them in the civilian environment, but if I work at it and help them understand. . . ."

A fifth group of reactions deals with specifics and expectations. "To a certain degree there is the stereotype of the clergy who 'couldn't make it' in civilian life and therefore became a chaplain. There is the stereotype of one 'trained to give orders'. There is a similar concern about my civilian colleagues." "I expect to have some problems with my fellow civilian clergy, who definitely have me stereotyped as one who has left the pastoral ministry. The person in the pew will accept me at face value and may even be more open knowing that I have served in the military."

In his book, Thinking About Retirement, J. Wallis says, "It is the inflexibility of these stereotypes that does the

damage."<sup>6</sup> Chaplains express their concern in straightforward terms. "I somewhat get the feeling that military chaplains are viewed by many as having deserted the ministry and if they do return to the civilian parish, they should start at the bottom--or donate their services." "I am afraid I've been stereotyped, 'well off financially,' out of touch with issues facing the true church,' 'a government employee.'" "Yes, I think there is some stereotyping of retired chaplains with more expectation for the 'retired' than the 'chaplain.'" "Most (name of denominations) parishioners--unless they are in a church with military members--don't have an accurate understanding of chaplains. Personally, I feel that the congregations which I 'supplied' during the past 27 years are a bit afraid of military chaplains. . . we are an unknown quantity." "I think laymen are much more accepting of a chaplain and are willing to afford opportunity and salary commensurate with experience. . . . I think civilian clergy are threatened by our expertise and jealous of our potential." "They probably think chaplains can't preach so could not make it in the local pastorate." "Some will view my return like a prodigal returning to the ministry. Most of my parishioners know very little about the role of a chaplain in the military." "I'm sure they have me and other military chaplains stereotyped. They find it hard to understand our ministry and I'm sure many of my contemporaries may resent the long absence from the diocese." "This will be a problem in my denomination, not as much with

parishioners as with fellow clergymen. . . . Many of our churches are very active and vocal in the peace movement which somehow seems to become antagonistic to the military."

There is a lot of work to be done in this area. Feelings are real and expectations are strong--both positively and negatively. Someone has said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. For what it may be worth to our understanding of stereotyping, one chaplain offers, "I do not believe that I will be 'stereotyped' by my fellow parishioners. Any markings that take place probably would be the result of my emotions, feelings and apprehensions. Stereotyping frequently comes to individuals who, in my option, cannot divorce themselves from the 'military' and have forgotten their heritage."

The third and final section in this paper will deal with the role of the endoring agencies in the retirement/transitional period for chaplains. Active duty chaplains were asked two specific questions which deal with expectations which they have of the endorsers and intentional transitional programs which they were aware of. In response to the question "I expect my denomination/endorsing agency to," candor was the rule of the thumb. Chaplains do have expectations. They may be right, wrong, or totally beyond the capacities of the church groups they represent. It is not the prupose of this writer to say one way or the other. However, it would seem apparent that the present chaplain/endorser relationship for a majority of chaplains surveyed on this specific point leaves room for improvement.

What then are some of the views of chaplains in terms of this question: "They will welcome me home although I will begin at below the level at which I left; to be supportive of my transition and provide opportunity for service." "The endorsing agency will send letter of thanks to dioceses; the dioceses to welcome me with open arms." ". . . offer me degree of flexibility as to assignment, support any choice of mine which he approves." "Help me if I need it." "Be very helpful; let the churches know how well trained we are." "My expectations of the agency are unclear. I do expect that my relationship with my church will best be sustained and monitored by our local conference. . . . My denomination can supply me with a list of pastoral vacancies and refer me to conference moderators by letter." "Assist me where necessary, if necessary. Fortunately, the organization of the (his church) is such that upon return to my residence I will receive the assistance required to make any adjustments necessary and to secure a church." "Assist me in searching for a form of ministry that is beneficial to my church, fulfilling for me and my family." "Assist in locating an appropriate church for me to pastor. Assist in binding the gap between a retiring chaplain and the denomination." "Offer some parish or specialized ministry options." "The Bishop says, 'Come on back, there will be a place for you even if it is in the middle of the year.'" "Put me to work ASAP. I'd like to take some time off to visit friends around the country/world--but



expect my Bishop will want me back right away. I might ask permission to attend some up-date courses in theology."

Not all chaplains feel they will have such direct access to parish ministries. Perhaps the different church structures lend themselves to either built in positive or negative possibilities on this issue of involvement. For example, a large number of chaplains view the role of the endorser as a "congratulator," one who will "receive me back warmly, give me some options and support my transition." "Be cordial to me, provide references." "Do nothing--perhaps send me a card. (I don't expect them to do any thing and there is no ill-will involved.)" "Support me in needed recommendation, keep contact with me on a 'how goes it.'" "Keep me on the mailing list, invite me to the annual chaplains' dinner; ask my assistance and advice at getting new chaplains on board." "Keep me informed of job opportunities, keep me informed of general church news, and make a visit every other year." "Use my experience in orienting clergy persons endorsed for active duty." Be supportive in prayer; give, if requested, recommendations." "Be supportive, assist in the transition by giving me guidance and treat me as though I have 20-30 years pastoral experience." "To be supportive, as they have been during my career. (Church) has a 'guaranteed appointment' process which I expect to be a part of upon return to civilian ministry." "Verify our faithfulness in service to potential agencies. . . ." "To allow for the opportunity for inputs

from me to the commission about the role of chaplains within the military."

Perhaps this one says it best: "Give me every chance to serve they would give any other minister."

A third and final group of chaplains responded with "none" in terms of expectations or made some interesting suggestions as to what they hoped for or expected in the relationship with the endorsers. For example, "Check with the Air Force to see what kind of quality of ministry (I have had), then let the denomination know in the state that I retire in." "Do absolutely nothing. They have neither the authority nor competency to assist chaplains--on active duty or in a retired status." "Accept my retirement and do nothing. Let me compete with all the young troops just out of seminary to obtain a position, and offer me a job that pays little or nothing because of my 'lucrative' retirement income." "Empathize with my needs, but little else." "Send me a nice letter of thanks for 'all those years.'" "Forget me the day after I leave--in any official capacity and expect me to support their work financially." "Do nothing but send a 'form' letter saying that we acknowledge your retirement, and will you continue to donate to our special funds." "Do nothing unless I implore them. They have already told me they do not know when a person retires unless notified by a friend or the chaplain. The Chief's office is too busy to notify denominational agencies of personnel actions." "Be notified by me of my retirement,

nothing more." "Benign neglect, impersonally concerned and rhetorically interested." "My denomination will do nothing." "Wish me luck in finding a place to serve." "Open a few doors, but with some reservations. The endorsing agency does not have a strong impact on this area."

Shall we conclude this section with the following chaplain response: "Help me find a church if I feel compelled to retire. To give me \$500.00 per month if I leave service without a call (up to six months by church policy)."

When Shakespeare set the scenes for drama of life, he put the word "exits" before the word "entrances." Thus, "the entrance into the new phase of life in retirement deserves more attention than the exit from the role in the previous scene, but the exit has to be made first."<sup>7</sup> Perhaps it goes without saying that the expectation levels of chaplains in making the "exits" to the "new entrance" is in some cases positive; in others, disappointment; in others, simply neutral.

Solomon of Bible fame was known the world over for his "wisdom." Often times we do not ask people who have had experiences in life what advice they might give to those younger than they. Active duty chaplains were asked "What advice, if any, would you give to the young chaplains with five years or less in the Air Force?" The suggestion was also made that the advice come from two directions--long-range financial and ministry securities.

The discussion of their inputs will first focus on the area of financial suggestions. The number one suggestion for

long-range financial planning is the Individual Retirement Account (IRA). Seventy percent of the chaplains included this in their recommendations. Purchase of homes, investing in land and other securities are considered very important for the long range plan. Specifics are described as follows: "Buy a home within the first seven years of active duty." Be wise and industrious in financial planning." "Set up a good investment program, either IRA, money market or real estate. Be a good steward, set the example. Don't neglect continuing education." "Seek professional counsel from a financial counselor and develop a sensible, reasonable and affordable plan that a family can live with. Save--put into a savings account 10 percent of your net income each month as a starter and do not touch it." "Buy a home as soon as you can and keep it until retirement." "If a chaplain has the required financial skills, he should develop a financial program that will provide for his needs independent of any retirement program the military offers." "Start early, shop around, get a program that fits your present needs and your future dreams." "Get into the housing market. Learn skills in CDIs that are marketable when you retire." "Should invest in retired or rental houses which they live in on various assignments." "Start an IRA." "Invest in land. Help wife to finish college, if necessary." "Buy your own home and build up equity. Get into some conservative financial program such as security bonds and carry adequate life insurance and homeowner's policies." "Invest monies early for college education expenses for children."

A second area of significant contribution comes from the religious/professional point of view. A central theme in all responses seems to be: "Give all you have got to the ministry and stay in touch with your religious endorser." For example, "Enjoy ministry, give all you have got to ministry. Don't worry about OERs--be a team member. Stay in touch with your denomination and be true to your faith." "If you are committed to military ministry, accept a regular commission--if not, return to the parish and get on with your calling. Take all of the educational opportunities." "Keep your eye on your spiritual vocation--never waiver from it; everything else will fall in place (financial ambitions and assignments, seeking staff positions, schools, etc., can move a chaplain off center)." "Stay on only if you like the chaplaincy. If you go to work each day glad to be a chaplain. . . 15 or more years is too long to be miserable. The retirement is good but it is not worth the needed fulfillment." "Be concerned with ministry, a sense of and feel for ministry. Career progression and OERs are important, but not top priority. Perhaps I would have given more attention to this area but I have no regrets." "Make a commitment to ministry or get out at the earliest possible moment. By commitment, I mean to recognize and make peace with the fact that one must work within a system which imposes certain limitations and requires certain work which the chaplain would not face in civilian life. If a chaplain cannot be at ease within him/

herself in the military environment, if such an environment causes tension, then get out." "Keep close ties with local churches and denominational officials. Give 10 percent of your income to the church." "Keep an active relationship with your denominational endorsers. . . keeping them up-to-date as to your educational updating, years in service, and any personal desires relative to the retirement time frame." "Maintain good communication with your own denomination. Practice and improve your own pastoral skills at every opportunity. The Air Force will provide you greater opportunity for professional development than most any church could ever offer. . . take advantage of it." "This is a great place to minister to people. . . . go to the people." "Establish a good reputation--it will stay with you. Don't neglect the family." "If they elect to stay, come to terms at that time to be selected or not selected for promotion and make their full commitment to this ministry--regardless." "Remember that we are in the ministry. The Air Force has some special opportunities and a few disadvantages but the bottom line is ministry, whether in the Air Force or civilian parish."

Lieutenant General Paul S. Willard in "Retirement from the Armed Forces" says, "The prudent man, in close consultation with his wife, makes long range plans concerning his insurance, savings, investment programs and plans which are integrated in this his retirement probabilities."<sup>8</sup> Many of the married chaplains have indicated how important they feel it is to involve the wife and children in the long-range planning process.

A third block of responses is what I call the philosophical/analytical approach to this subject. These insights which when applied can really help the young chaplain in his/her long-range planning. "I encourage either a program of professional certification in counseling or academic degrees. I am not convinced that the Doctor of Ministry degrees are of any significance in the academic world--thus, go to the university." "I would lobby for professional pay. I would warn him of the dangers of Peter's Principle. That he is working in a bureaucracy in which a bureaucrat defines human beings as one who has his papers in order. By that, procedures and techniques are more important than substance." "Be bold in communicating to your rating official your true thoughts about your career; your financial security and your ministerial opportunities depend upon the way you are rated." "I could write a book on this one." "Keep up your ties with your civilian friends; you never know when a RIF (reduction in force) might come along." "I despise this question. The ingredient for ministry is 'faith' in God, not financial security. We can never save the world or any institution when we look to it for security. If we cannot survive on the wages from our work, it may be a message to change occupation. Name one servant God did not take care of--name one who made a significant contribution who put institutional security first. Whenever a clergy person first considers 'security,' he violates his ministry." "Pray, study, be open to change."

Allow for maturing, don't think you know it all just because you've more recently come from the seminary/parish/hospital ministry. . . . I find that too many young chaplains seem to think they know more than the chaplains (of whatever denomination) already in the Air Force for some few or many years. It is an individual thing, but some of the young ones seem overly full of themselves, and some lack a sense of humor-- a most important item. They take themselves too seriously." "For a Catholic? Forget financial and ministry security. . . you'll be fed and you'll always have a job. As long as you're convinced you are serving God and his people, well stay; if you feel you could do better in civilian life, get out. . . ." "Stay in and work like hell, and don't lose your sense of ministry." "Big difference here between celibates and married chaplains who usually face retirement and college-age children in same time frame." In conclusion, one chaplain challenges the Chaplain Corps by saying, "Don't forget responsibility to be charitable. Beware of becoming overly concerned about money, properties and possessions. . . as many chaplains are. Avariciousness is prevalent in the chaplaincy."

The active duty chaplains were asked to respond to one final question: "Looking at your military career and your denominational relationship, if you could start all over again, what might you do differently?" Sixty percent said they were perfectly happy with the way both the military career and denominational relationship had gone; i.e., they would do



nothing differently, or at most, they might work harder. The balance of the responses might be compared to "sweet and sour" pork.

On entering active duty, "The timing of my departure from the diocese was near perfect; i.e., I would have been reassigned during the same month (normal rotation). However, it would have been beneficial if I could have entered the Air Force a few years sooner." Four priests and one Protestant indicated that they wished they could have come on active duty earlier.

Samples of other responses, both bitter and sweet, are shared as follows: "Military career--forget about the ministry and get involved with programs that shine on an O.E.R. and before the wheels and get promoted. It works better than doing excellent pastoral work and is a lot easier." "Listen more--speak less." "I would look out for myself, in addition to looking out for others. I have been able to protect others and assisted several on their way to colonel, but at the expense of my own advancement. I could write a book on the subject." "Be more pre-occupied with my career than the ministry. I would not be intimidated by the military system and I would want to be better informed of what my civilian denomination stance is on certain issues and have them clarified." "Nothing at this time. I hope to be able to continue ministry within the framework of the (name of church). . . Not many pastors are called upon to manage and supervise 14 chaplains

and a total staff of 28. However, it would be gratifying to me to be able to report to the bishop and say, 'Salary is unimportant. I can live on my retirement income--where can you use me?'" "I have been loyal to my church and my boss. I have achieved what I set out to do. . . made colonel and 30 years of dedicated service for God and country. When I retire in the near future, I will do so with pride, honor and dignity. The Lord has blessed in a marvelous way." "I consider myself fortunate to have lasted this long--things I would have done differently are mostly personal. Also, I would have avoided confrontations with senior chaplains. . . . ran into difficulties in various levels of my career--then again, some issues and problems are unavoidable." "Submit my quarterly reports more promptly and regularly." "Study more carefully the psychology of bureaucratic hierarchies."

On the other hand, "I would be much more denominationally oriented; i.e., I would keep close contact with my denomination by attending meetings, conferences and church meetings." And then there is this interesting view: "Attempt to live up to the institutional model of a chaplain--less combative and assertive. . . more time getting to know the brass on base and at headquarters and ministering to them." "Pay a bit more attention to rank--visit the colonel/general's homes as I did the sergeants and chiefs--for personal benefit, no--but because rank is very often lonely."

One chaplain says he would do nothing differently. He concludes, "I am not a politician and never plan to be."

I am committed to the ministry of Jesus Christ. I do not play politics. . ."

The final three illustrate a concern to "fit into the military chaplaincy" model a bit better. "I would try to minister within the system a bit more effectively. I would place greater emphasis on ministry to the military member. Ministry through the years has emphasized the family members and often neglected the very people we came into the service for--the military members." "Militarily, I would pay closer attention to the Air Force expectations of my professional specialities. One cannot just do 'ministry' without fitting into the Air Force chaplaincy concept--not if promotions are to come. I do not believe one can hope for the better assignments and deserved promotions, if one fails to become an integral part of the system. . . Young chaplains may not think OERs, relationships with superiors and fellow chaplains are important to self-satisfaction and professional goals, but they most definitely are. . . and are necessary if career progression is to come. . ."

Perhaps to this concluding contribution sets the most overriding reaction to this question: "Maintain close denomination ties with your endorsing agency, your church and seminary. I believe it would be especially important to develop supportive relationships with chaplains of your own denomination who are in the same branch of service that you are a member of. Above all else, maintain your convictions, your

integrity, and your honor regardless of what it might appear to cost you at the moment. Remember, God called you, ordained you, and appointed you to bear fruit in His fields. As you are faithful, available and teachable, you may rest assured, He will watch over and protect you."

### CHAPTER III

#### THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE--Retired

If the indicators in this study are any sign at all as to how well the retired chaplains are doing, surely we can rejoice with them and look forward to that special time.

More important than the length of time that a man's heart beat and his breath continue is the quality of life. Must the declining years be spent in loneliness, boredom, and the frustration<sup>9</sup> born of usefulness and a conviction of being unwanted?

The quality of life experienced by a huge majority is high and growing higher.

Perhaps Gereon Zimmerman captures the idea well when he says,

The difficult task of understanding one's life--without self-pity, without self-denial, without self-deception--is undoubtedly a major step in making the final years more meaningful. The rhythm of life is always different, and it is always the same. It is flow and ebb, and ebb and flow. Understand this cycle and retirement will be a flow of satisfaction.<sup>10</sup>

Of the 57 percent who responded, the average length of time into retirement is 5 years, 6 months and 16 days. The longest time of retirement is 19 years while the shortest is 3 months. At the time of retirement, the average length of time served on active duty was 24 years, 4 months, and 13 days. The shortest length of time for active duty was 20 years while the longest length was 31 years and 8 months.

One difficulty which faces some retirees is how to fill up the time they formerly spent on the job. Chaplains

were to respond as follows:

Please mark the following categories according to your present activities/work:

- A. Full-time work in a "ministry-related" field
- B. Part-time work in a "ministry-related" field
- C. Work in another vocation area
- D. Percent of time spent in hobbies/recreation
- E. Percent of time spent in travel.

Fifty-five percent indicated they were presently working in a full-time ministry-related field. Chaplains were not asked to indicate what form of ministry they are presently working in; i.e., pastoral, counselor, industrial, penal institutions, etc. It is important to remember that active duty chaplains indicated by a margin of 70 percent that they plan to return to the pastoral ministry.

Again, 39 percent of the retired chaplains indicated they are working part-time in a ministry-related field. Nine percent indicated they are working in "another field." Most of the chaplains underscored in narrative comments how important they felt some sort of hobby or free time was. They say they spend 19.7 percent of their time in hobbies and 10.8 percent traveling.

A final category, "other," was included to see if we might get a feel for specialized ministers of jobs chaplains might be involved in. This potpourri listing included dean, department of chaplains; chairman, department of missions; marriage counselors; retreats; workshops; voluntary work in alcoholism; full-time student in graduate school; school,

helper with a carpenter; professional reading and writing; ecumencial center for clinical training; volunteer work with alcoholics in hospital setting; writing for magazines; full-time student; theological discussion group; trust manager and investments; and continuing education in pastoral counseling. Retired chaplains, for the most part, are not retired--they have transitioned into other forms of ministry or other jobs.

When people contemplate retirement, often times there are special concerns: what about this and what about that. One lady describes it in understandable terms. "It's like shopping. You look in your purse and suddenly find it's almost empty. You wonder where it's all gone. For the moment, you feel you've been robbed. . . I did anyway."<sup>11</sup> I therefore asked chaplains to look at a list of eight possible concerns. (The list could have been longer.) Response numbers 1-4 were qualified as follows: 1 - Very important; 2 - Important; 3 - Not so important; and 4 - Unimportant. "NA" was used as a catch-all category.

The results were most interesting. Questions and responses are listed individually:

(1) How to maintain a meaningful relationship with church/synagogue

Responses:	1	-	47%
	2	-	26%
	3	-	13%
	4	-	10%
	NA	-	4%

(2) How to meet financial needs over the retirement years

Responses: 1 - 18.9%  
 2 - 29.3%  
 3 - 18.9%  
 4 - 27.5%  
 NA - 6%

(3) How to cope with health problems (my own and those of my spouse, if applicable)

Responses: 1 - 25.4%  
 2 - 38.9%  
 3 - 16.9%  
 4 - 11.8%  
 NA - 6%

(4) Enjoying my second career

Responses: 1 - 55%  
 2 - 15.5%  
 3 - 3%  
 4 - 1%  
 NA - 24%

(5) How to learn about voluntary agencies in which to participate on a part-time basis

Responses: 1 - 5%  
 2 - 12.5%  
 3 - 26.7%  
 4 - 26.7%  
 NA - 28.5%

(6) How to find another "ministry" in my religious order

Responses: 1 - 8%  
 2 - 8%  
 3 - 15.2%  
 4 - 36.9%  
 NA - 28.5%

(7) Facing the prospect of death

Responses: 1 - 9%\*  
 2 - 25%  
 3 - 21.8%  
 4 - 30.9%  
 NA - 12.7%

\*One chaplain was concerned with his wife's illness, not his own illness/death.



(8) How to avoid loneliness and isolation

Responses:      1 - 16%  
                  2 - 8.9%  
                  3 - 21.4%  
                  4 - 39.2%  
                  NA - 14.2%

Retired chaplains, like their active duty counterparts, found no difficulty in "telling it like it is." Good memories seem to be very important to continued growth in life. I asked "What aspect of your active duty ministry did you cherish most and regretted giving up?" The responses are as varied as the rainbow and they are just as rich in meaning.

"The fellowship of chaplains--all over SAC." "Team ministry." "Commanderie with chapel staff people." "The close network of friends in ministry from every tradition--COMMUNITY (his caps)." "Pastoral counseling and day-to-day contact with people." "Building a church life in a chapel and demonstrating that such a life is successful." "Professional leadership in my role and work."

Several chaplains indicated that retirement from the military chaplaincy simply meant moving onward and upward. One says it so well when he shared, "There has not been a break. I loved and cherished the ministry of the chaplaincy. But I have found equal challenge in new areas: fellowship of Christian athletics, business chaplaincy, and a small pastorate."

Others talk of the relationship they had with the professionals in the United States Air Force. For example,

"Ministry to a very professional group of people." "Having a part in helping maintain a spiritual 'tone' in the lives of dedicated, patriotic professionals of the USAF." "Being a part of the Air Force mission and fellowship with fellow chaplains." And "Working with young, dedicated Americans."

Several chaplains reflected on the close and meaningful relationship which they had enjoyed with people of the chapel. For example, "The parishioners, dedicated and devoted members of the Chapel Family." "Relationship and access to parishioners." "The closeness of the Air Force Family and the daily ecumenical atmosphere--the challenge of change." The feeling of belonging, the knowledge that my mission was important, the adventure of new places and new faces, the security of a military base."

The pastoral and counseling relations within the military community are key areas of "good memories." "Freedom or opportunity to minister to people any time and anywhere and to help them to know the living Savior." "Ministry to persons in the military community." "Troop visitation--single person ministry." "The independence with which a military chaplain is able to work with young people and with the military establishment."

Team ministry and breaking the word together rate high on most reports. "The association, companionship, and friendship with colleagues in the ministry." "Pastoral ministry to parishioners and also other chaplains." "Daily ministry

with ministers, priests, and rabbis." "Team ministry, travel, and continuing education opportunities." And one adds, "I most cherish the ministry of Word and Sacrament. . . I have not given them up."

One final note in terms of "things" missed. Several chaplains indicated they did in fact miss the travel and seeing different parts of the world. One indicated he missed the military telephone--the AUTOVON.

Military experiences for chaplains are not all rosy. Some of the responses to follow reflect, perhaps in some areas, in which the institution of chaplaincy might give attention to in terms of eliminating or reducing. The question was as follows: "What aspect of your active duty ministry did you have the least regrets about giving up?"

Would you believe "Paper work," "Paper administration," attending "all those meetings," "Remote assignments," "Travel," "Nothing, I loved it all," "Lectures, values clarification type," "Social," "Base chapel ministry," "Rating chaplains within the parameters of the OER system," "On call duty," "Getting specialists to pitch in and do unmilitary things, i.e, make sure the coffee area and ash trays and dump trash, etc., were cleaned up."

The mention of "paper work" and "administration" was legion. Several did indicate they had difficulty working with fellow chaplains. For example, "Working for egocentric bosses." "Dealing with the military vicarate." "Supervision of

'confrontal' nature." "The constant power struggle in the chaplaincy." "The long hours--having several base chaplains who really didn't care about the ministry."

A final grouping came with no specific theme--just frustrations that might just still be in the Air Force chaplaincy. For example, "The innumerable boards, committees and staff meetings." "Command snoopers and the telephone." "Exercises in futility, the paper machine, dealing with commanders who should have been (so they thought) chaplains--rare on this point." What about personnel actions? "The administrative headaches and the total lack of control over who was going to work for you and with you. Personnel matters were always in flux." "Getting out of SAC,"

What do chaplains dream about when they anticipate retirement? Those who are retired were asked to reflect back on the retirement date and respond to the aspect of retirement they most looked forward to. Typical responses include "Moving into our own house," "Having more free time with my wife and family," "Returning to a civilian parish," "Fixing up our retirement home," "Less pressure but continued work," "Serving only my denomination--new mountains of ministry to climb," "NONE," "Expressions and appreciation from friends and the family," "Using my military experience in the training of new ministers through our Bible College." "None of it, but did enjoy the fact of more than 30 days of leave per year," "I did look forward to retirement," "I didn't want to retire at all,"

"Doing what I wanted to do for me, and not having some 06 (colonel) telling me I could not do it because he did not want it done," "Time to do what I choose to do," "Beginning a new career in a profession that interests and challenges me," "Entering the (name of school) and work on my Doctoral of Ministry program which was completed 4 years after retirement," "REST. . . I elected to leave a major command headquarters to lead an installation religious program. I had forgotten how much the base chaplain was personally involved in a program and I was not aware that I had grown older. The combination nearly killed me."

Conversely, as a part of the same question, the chaplains were asked to share what aspect of retirement did they least look forward to. Responses are even more varied and interesting than those previously mentioned. For example, "There is a womb-like quality to the Air Force family that is hard to leave. It was more difficult for my wife than for me, interestingly enough. My work here has absorbed me so that I do not miss the chaplaincy as such." "Loss of full-time pay," "NONE," "The loss of the military community," "Moving from the base, and having to decide everyday what to wear," "Being treated as a retired individual by active duty people (hospital, etc.)," "Paucity of pastoral opportunities," "Loss of friends and associates," "The ceremony," "Demand on my time and starting all over," "Uncertainty about dioceses and personnel policies therein," "The lack of involvement in a daily exciting

life," "Having to start over again in something else at the age of 56," "Leaving friends and Air Force surroundings--the togetherness of the Air Force family and the privilege of ministry in this setting." "Finding a 'place' in the new life," "The possibility of not being needed--I guess that is a fear we all have," "Loss of military benefits (medical, travel). The promised medical care in military facility is often nonexistent--CHAMPUS is available. Forget about travel on MAC. The retiree's priority is just below a 2nd Lt's pet cat." "Knowing that I had to prove to many people and the church organization that I could be a local minister," "Using my military experience in the training of new ministers through our Bible College." "Reduced income, but honestly even this did not really bother me." "NONE--I left with good feelings for the chaplaincy and my career. I have not looked back and I have no regrets. The chaplaincy was but one of the chapters of my life. The best is yet to come."

Often time there is discussion on the "free time" issue. Some chaplains indicated they were looking forward to having more free time. Zimmerman discusses this notion of work/free time as he says,

Ours is a work-centered culture, so most people lean on a single identity. For most people, it is a major problem to structure twenty-four hours a day for living. Work does that for them so easily and so automatically that they never give it a second thought. Even when they are on a vacation, the assurance that they will go back to work helps them spend that free time profitably. If your psychological needs determine that a job is essential to to your well-being, then you ought to make every effort to

continue working as long as you are able. It is your salvation.<sup>12</sup>

The chaplains were asked about their "free" time and requested to check one of three areas. The areas and percentage are indicated below:

As busy as ever	67.2%
Have some free time	16.3%
Have all the free time I want	- 16.3%

"The meaningful use of time has always perplexed man. At all ages he frets about monotony. Thus, how many times have you heard a child complain, 'There's nothing to do'."<sup>13</sup> Perhaps it is "how one views" freedom from military or "free time" that makes the difference. Each chaplain was asked "Is your 'free' time a problem? Yes, No, and if yes, how?" Ninety-three percent say it is not a problem. The remaining 7 percent who said it was, with one exception, said they just did not have enough FREE time. The one individual said he is finding it boring.

Assuming that the American way of life/work is "work-oriented," I asked a psychological question that tries to focus in on that issue. "Do you feel lifelong labor is really essential in order to achieve and maintain a sense of personal worth?" Each chaplain was asked to explain his answer. Several took exception to the word LABOR. A cross section of the answers/explanations is shared in order to do justice to feelings on this issue. "Yes. I cannot imagine, at age 51, being fully 'retired'. It contradicts my understanding of ministry. If we have been 'called' to a special task, equipped with special

gifts, then how can we at an early age say that we are through doing that ministry." "No, I do not see myself as of less value since I am only employed part-time. I have time to enjoy hobbies, and marriage encounter activities which is a fulfilling ministry on a part volunteer basis." "Yes, as a priest I definitely feel I must contribute my experience and talents to the church and people." "No. I did not want to take a congregation because of the theological turmoil in my church at the time of my retirement. I felt I had become too liberal in my views and useless controversy could arise. You can't get into much trouble on a part-time basis." "No. My worth is a 'given' from the hand of God. But I feel we are called to walk behind Him and assist in bringing some good into the world. It is the nature of His sons that they are little creators along with Him. There is some way for each of us to make this world better."

Others added their views. "Yes. A person needs some disciplined activity--whether it is gainful employment or hobbies. I know I need some sense of responsibility. I need to feel needed." "Yes. To retire is to 'die'. Golf, fishing, etc., are great but need something else to do after the first week." "Yes, lifelong labor is not the term I would use. I would say that it is important to keep setting goals. Have plans for the next day (no idle time) unless it is your choice." "Yes. I have made a commitment as a Priest and I will fulfill as long as health and age permits." "For one who is single,



a definite sense of self-worth is usually to be found in one's work, assuming it to be pleasant and rewarding as it was for me." "No. The time comes when one has finished and there ought to be a time for something else--or nothing. Too many clergymen feel that they can never retire." "No. Personal worth is based on what you are, i.e., your own self-image. If the 'work ethic' is essential to your self-worth, then it is critical to continue." "I was raised on the Protestant work ethic. Therefore, I feel that I must be doing something that has some value. Moreover, as a clergyman, I feel that I have an obligation to continue to share my faith and my skills with others." "Not labor, but activity. As a student of gerontology, I am convinced continued activity contributes to a long and vital life." "No, I did when I first retired. Now I have 'selected' the important factors of work and involvement and know how to enjoy each day, one at a time--with recreation, work, hobby, and just plain 'rest' in a well-balanced mode."

Finally, "Yes. Self-esteem is a part of our Christian concept and work is somehow related to that concept." "No. I would hope that everyone has a mission. When one completes that mission, he should not feel guilty about not launching a new one. Neither should one try to hold on to the past. What is past was good, I feel no inclination to return to it, hold on to it, or to duplicate it." "Yes. Not labor for the sake of labor but creative, productive, helpful vocation that continues as long as there is energy available." "Yes. My years

as a chaplain were under assignment by my denomination and upon retirement I returned to my conference and resumed duty under the appointive process of the church. I was appointed minister of pastoral care of a 5,200-member church and love every minute of it."

Although chaplains had been asked to spontaneously indicate the areas which they regretted most to give up, a second set of questions focused on the same area in a different manner--a listing was shared and they were to be rank-ordered in terms of number 1 being the most important and number 6 being the least. A place for "other" was also available. The six areas are listed below in the order of most importance to the least important as per the responses. The question was "What aspect of your military chaplaincy career did you cherish most and regretted giving up?"

A. Interpersonal Relations	2
B. Ecumenical Ministry	2.4
*C. Regular Hours	4.5
D. Income	4.9
E. Intellectual Stimulation	5.6
F. Ego Satisfaction	5.6

\*Five chaplains said, "What regular hours?"

The "other" category included such items of meaningful work as "continuing education, level of responsibility and opportunity, pastoral ministry, and helping others to achieve successfully."

On the occasion of the chaplain's retirement, each was asked to indicate what they wanted to do. A list of four

items was suggested with an individual area for "other."

Listed areas and percentages for each are as follows:

A. Continue in a full-time ministry	44%
B. Train for a second career	13%
C. Continue your old career on a reduced scale	24%
D. Use your ministry skills in a volunteer capacity	11%

Six percent indicated "other" and said they wished to go into different fields which did not require additional training.

Continuing education has been important while on active duty. What happens after retirement? The question and responses are listed below.

After retirement did you return to school on a--

A. Full-time basis	15%
B. Part-time basis	22%
C. NA	62%

Those who returned on a full-time basis were seeking a Ph.D. in preparation for a college, seminary, or Bible College teaching position while the part-time basis were usually the Catholic priests who took the opportunity for a three-month theological up-date after military retirement.

As in the case of the active duty research, it was felt to be of value to ask the retired chaplains to share advice or wisdom with "soon-to-retire chaplains." The question, "If you were advising a 'soon-to-retire' chaplain, which of the following would you say best prepares a chaplain for retirement?" Each area was to be coded as follows: 1 - very important; 2 - fairly important; and 3 - unimportant. Most chaplains

interpreted this question to mean that military retirement was NOT retirement per se; rather it was transitional, into another job. Hence, the suggestions and degree of importance placed are as follows:

A. A Good Resume

Very important	42.3%
Fairly important	44.2%
Unimportant	13.4%

B. Personal contacts within endorsing religious body

Very important	74%
Fairly important	24%
Unimportant	2%

C. Newspaper Advertisements

Very important	4%
Fairly important	6%
Unimportant	89%

D. Employment agencies (public and/or private)

Very important	2%
Fairly important	24%
Unimportant	73%

E. Former Employers

Very important	19%
Fairly important	44%
Unimportant	36%

F. Personnel placement system of endorsing religious body

Very important	41%
Fairly important	47%
Unimportant	11.7%

The biblical promise of 70 years is laden with gloom.

For all our days are passed away in thee wrath: We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. (Psalm 90:9-10).

There was little indication that the retired chaplains who responded fit into the gloom and despair that seems to be hinted by the Psalmists. However, we know some people clergy included, who do not live their lives in the "joy of the Lord" or with the degree of success and fulfillment they would like to have. I believe wisdom is the acculturation of enough sense and experiences in life which one survives and emerges with perceptive insight as to what life might have been or could be for others. I think retired chaplains have some wisdom to share. We do not ask and listen enough to those who have been this way before.

In the final section to retired chaplains, I ask for inputs on two counts. First, "Based on your experiences, what advice would you offer to a new chaplain who is just coming on active duty?" A cross section of those responses is represented as follows: "The Chaplaincy is a vocation superimposed on a person's religious ordination as a vocation. It is a special charisma--if a young chaplain has it, let him reach out and touch wonderful people. If not, advise him to resign and return to civilian life." "Keep in close contact with your own religious body and your endorsing agency. Develop a new relationship with the priest as well as your protestant chaplains. Start and maintain a daily meditation and prayer life. Work primarily where you are assigned and with your immediate boss." "Forget about OERs and work for the Lord and the welfare of the people. Enjoy working at any assignment--the interesting

and the dull. Make ministry #1 and career #2." "If you want to advance, know the regulations, be quick to say 'yes' to requests for your time. Be a team member, get to know and try to understand the other chaplains' positions." "Learn how your new world operates and learn how to use the system to help those who look to you for help. Keep physically fit." "Do good early. That means if you do not rate at the top on OERs at the beginning, you don't have a prayer for a long career. They will catch you at Major for a passover. If no good tickets early, then get out at five or six years, take a church and stay in the Reserve." "Never forget your calling and the spiritual basis for your vocation. Stay tightly and responsibility tied to your denomination. Focus on ministry and career will take care of itself." "Remain on active duty. The Air Force Chaplaincy is one of the finest ministries for a clergy person. It is one of the greatest opportunities for service and personal growth." "To remember that always he is a representative of Jesus Christ and the Church which endorses him; never to compromise on his convictions and principles, but to be kindly, understanding, and sympathetic toward those who may differ. To give top priority to the needs of the people he will be serving." "Go for it. Become a dedicated Air Force Chaplain. Only by giving of yourself completely can you savor the joys and fulfillment of an Air Force Ministry." "Keep a copy of important Sunday bulletins and calendar of events."

It becomes very apparent after a few readings that retired chaplains believe very strongly in the purpose and mission of the chaplaincy--ministry first and foremost. For example, "stick to the faithful and conscientiousness performance of the duty and services for which you were ordained, and for which you came into the service. Stay away from so much of the new phangled garbage, techniques, and training [some encouraged from above] (brackets by retired chaplain), which tend to make you everything but a caring, visiting and ministering priest, minister, rabi. They take you away from the spiritual things that only a chaplain can and should do. Let the psychiatrists, psychologists, medical and social action personnel do their thing and earn their pay. Don't get bogged down in all those things except what you were called and ordained to do. Get back to basics and stay there." "Be well informed in theology and in all aspects of people's expectations. Be a spiritual chaplain. Be positive and assertive. Search for new ideas and programs." "Live life to the fullest everyday. Work hard and play hard." "Don't burn your bridges behind you. maintain liaison with your ecclesiastical superiors." "Know the good Book and how to preach and teach it. Be an interesting preacher and apply the Gospel as Jesus did. Learn how to wear out your shoes (his underline). Be available to ALL and put in 70 hours per week."

Some final comments focus exceptionally well on the calling. "Just as surely as you felt the 'call' to the ministry,

you should feel a special one to the chaplaincy. If married, make certain your wife feels that same urge. Accept your fellow chaplains for what they are--don't force your values on them." "Maintain a sense of calling to ministry. Develop and deepen your spiritual life; remember you are a minister/priest/rabbi first and foremost--the military man second. Keep family and friends a meaningful part of the life and don't take yourself too seriously."

One chaplain talks of "openness," another of "being your own man," yet another encourages realism. For example, "Do listen to the supervising chaplain. It is primarily his responsibility to get the most out of the individual chaplain and for the good of the installation and the glory of God." "Be your own man, but understanding and cooperative. The chaplain ministry is an exciting, challenging and rewarding mission. Make the most of it. Be ecumenical and realize that over the long haul some assignments will be better than others, but more good than bad. Don't try to live at your previous base. Accept the new one and make it the best possible." And on promotions, "Never get the idea that promotion is a reward for effective ministry--ministry is its own reward. Promotions may or may not come--even though deserved."

And finally some thoughts that sum it up very well are: "Be very open, know yourself, love yourself and be yourself. Shed old prejudices and enter into the ecumenical/inter-faith life with positive enthusiasm. Have a sense of



humor and take care of your 'little people' and take your day off and leave time too."

The second area of "advice to chaplains on active duty" is directed to a chaplain who has plans to retire in the next year. One retired chaplain pointed out that if the chaplain is just now making plans, no advice he might give him would give him could help. It was too late. Long range planning is essential.

Perhaps there is a lack of information on the retirement/transitional experience for the clergy that makes it one of those areas we just don't talk about or in other words, "Old chaplains don't retire, they just fade away." There are myths often times associated with retirement--many of which are feared as the real enemy in life. William Kane suggested five of these and developed each on its own lack of merit.

First, the retirement of human beings can be likened to putting a horse out to pasture. . . . This myth has merit only if you like to eat grass. Second, the only thing ahead of me is death. This myth has merit only if you view life as an extreme fatalist and fail to recognize that aging is a natural process which begins at birth. Third, retirement leads to a life of poverty. This myth is potentially valid only if you fail to plan for your future financial security. Fourth, retirement brings a loss of an individual's identity. This myth has merit only if you desire to go out to pastor via myth #1. And finally, no one is concerned about the retired. This myth is totally false.<sup>14</sup>

I am not at all sure that concern for the retired is that great when it comes to the military chaplaincy. Reports indicate that active duty chaplains are asking more and more about retirement. What is being done to help chaplains face

this new experience? What is the role of the churches? The endorsers? In an effort to move in the right direction, each retired chaplain was asked to share some wisdom on facing retirement. They did, by the pages.

For example, "Be flexible to an outside world that is not governed by rigid rules and regulations. Don't let your past military experiences dictate your future policies and endeavors. The real world rebels against hard, fast structured military personnel." "Schedule yourself and spouse for a marriage encounter weekend to strengthen couple communication at a deep level. Very valuable tool for retirement adjustment." "Plan a definite home and location (one you will like and enjoy). Make close contact with your church authorities and let them know of your specific talents and what you would like to do and contribute. Plan areas of relaxation (hobbies) that you enjoy and find uplifting and stimulating. Balance your retired life: pray, work and play, and take relaxing trips. Enjoy your new freedom and love your wife." "He/she should plan for their retirement several years before retirement. The USAF Chaplaincy should develop a program for chaplains returning as should the endorsing agents--possible cooperation between the two."

Some chaplains share their fears with us in that, "I was very much concerned about retirement (almost afraid of it) until this position as chaplain of the student congregation came up at (large university). It lets me stay in church

work while giving time for study and reading. I am now busier than ever and enjoying it more. . . . college kids keep you young." "Learn frugality. It means more freedom to choose. Start now to learn about the world outside and how to survive in it. Start your weaning process early. It will surprise you how much you are expected to do for yourself on the outside and at your own expense." "Make up a 'professional' resume and send it to many places. Aim at an associate job and you'll get one. Aim for a 'high steeple' church and plan to be disappointed." "If you have not maintained close ties with your denomination, it's probably too late; but keep your church leadership appraised of your desires, plans, dreams, ambitions, and remember, you need them more than they need you." "Don't do it (retire)--until you have to, then do it more gracefully than I." "Expect to be surprised how easily you will divorce the USAF, with grace; expect to be surprised how quickly the USAF will forget you, without malice."

Some chaplains focused in on "cutting the cord" with the military. "Once you retire, forget about the military. Look upon your experience as a chapter in your life that has been completed. Start a new chapter. Life is a growth and movement toward goals. Military retirement has satisfied one goal. . . now look forward." "Do not build up a fear of retirement. Be willing to bow in another direction. Be flexible. Don't expect your former associates to solve your

adjustment problems." And in some contrast to these thoughts, "Have him/her go to school for updating. Spend time at the dentist. Look to locate near a base that will not close. Keep in touch with military through after-burner program." "You have finished a career--fulfilled your obligations. Do what you enjoy and want to do. The rest of your life is yours, enjoy it." "Plan, pray and accept." "Continue contacts with old friends. Find something that needs doing--go wherever that is, roll up your sleeves and go to work." "Don't expect any help from outside sources. The church has many problems in accepting a former chaplain. Be ready for a cold shoulder from fellow ministers. . . . When you retire you are 'out' except for personal friends." "Each one must decide for himself the direction he is to take. . . . I am less involved in institutional religion than ever before in my life. Yet my faith, experiences have deepened and I feel positive Divine direction in my new medical career." "Find ways to begin involvement in a civilian life prior to release from the military."

A final area on which we will focus is the relationships with the denominations and/or churches and the possible ministries therein. One chaplain suggests, "Begin planning early. If seeking employment within your denomination, find people who will recommend you for positions. The unknown hierarchy may just reward you as someone who has been 'out of the parish ministry' for 20 years or more." "Don't heed the

scriptural injunction that says 'take no thought for tomorrow'  
. . . . You should plan your post-retirement ministry with  
great care and with dedication in seeking God's will. If you  
want to go into a specific ministry that differs from your  
present skills, map out an academic training program that  
will suit its self to that. Plan like you have a hundred  
more years to live. This will make post-retirement exciting.  
The fields are still 'white unto harvest and the labourers  
are few.'" "If he is spiritually motivated, stay in the  
ministry and re-train for return to the civilian ministry.  
Keep in touch with denominational endorsing agency and denom-  
inational leaders."

"Don't try to live in the past and try to impress  
people with what you were, where you were, etc., . . . . Be  
grateful for the great experiences of the chaplaincy and try  
to put them to work in your continuing ministry." "Never  
think this is the end of life. . . it can be a thrilling new  
beginning. The decision is made--don't look back too often.  
Keep on living life to its fullest--for the glory of the Lord."  
"I feel every chaplain should return to some form of ministry.  
No one is waiting for you with open arms. You will have to  
prove yourself if you have not maintained close liaison with  
your ecclesiastical superiors. Be prepared to tell them what  
you have to offer, not what you are interested in getting  
. . . ." "I pastor a large debt-free church in . . . . I  
don't like the term retire and hope I never do. . . just make

a few changes, shift gears, and keep active in the ministry. I plan to pastor as long as I am physically able."

One final comment summarizes so many of the "feelings" which these chaplains have included: "Be very realistic. . . there is a period of adjustment, sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle. I figured it would take me three months; it took one year. Be thankful for the great years in the USAF. Keep in touch with your friends but don't live in the past. Civil-ians aren't the least bit interested or impressed with your military service record. . . . Go with your strengths and experiences. We chaplains have so much to offer spiritually and otherwise, we can help others grow as we continue to grow. Don't retire retire. I don't mean to get caught up in the work ethic or the achievement society, keep growing, be posi-tive, love God--spend time with Him. Love yourself, spend time with yourself, love and enjoy your family and friends, and spend time with them. . . (end of homily)."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ROLE OF THE ENDORSERS

Military chaplains are accountable to at least two authorities. First, they are accountable to the religious order, i.e., "religious endorser," who says to the military community, "Reverend John Doe is fully qualified to serve as a chaplain and represent our faith group well." Second, the military community surely has its set of rules, regulations and expectations, i.e., authority to which the chaplain must abide. All of the active duty chaplains indicated they had certain expectations of the endorser; some good, some not so good. A few did not really care one way or the other.

This chapter is not intended to highlight any particular action that any one denominational agency is or is not doing. Nor is it intended to serve as another veneration medium for the active duty chaplain who feels very strongly, "ain't nothing really happening. . ." Fifty-one letters were mailed to endorsers. Nineteen responded and of the 19 who did answer, ten indicated and/or included specialized efforts which they make in order to help the soon-to-retire chaplain return to the civilian work force or total retirement.

A few endorsers are very new at the responsibility; thus, they like others of us are "searching," are looking for an idea, and surely expressed a great deal of interest in the results of this paper and other work in this area.

I therefore wish to share parts of letters and have included in Appendices A, B, and C three information forms used by some church groups in order to "help" their chaplains return/transition back to civilian life. All letters, forms and parts thereof are used with specific permission from those making the contributions.

Reverend Paul W. Strickland, Director of the American Baptist Chaplaincy Commission, says,

I assist our American Baptists at the point of retirement, though this is primarily by referring them to the computer resource for placement purposes within the denomination, specifically American Baptist Personnel Services. I also write letters of reference, again particularly to the Executive Ministers in the various regions of our denominational life.

Dr. Thos. F. Zimmerman, Chairman, Commission on Chaplains, The Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri, says,

It is the desire of our headquarters leadership to reach out to retiring chaplains and facilitate and assist their placement in every way possible. This concern has been expressed by the formation of special committees to help us better understand the needs and ways we can help. (See Appendix A.)

Reverend Ike C. Barnett, Jr., Associate Director for the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel, adds,

This office is marginally involved in the placement of chaplains after retirement, though we do assist when we can. The Vocation Agency of the church is primarily the focal point in the search for vacancies. However, some chaplains receive assistance from their home Presbytery or make their own search. In any event the chaplain must "sell himself" since there is no placement by a Bishop or Superintendent. . . . We urge those in the military now to begin thinking about relocation 18 months ahead of time. They are urged to prepare or update their dossier



and correspond with their Presbytery and the Vocation Agency about possible vacancies. . . . The Presbyterian Council will make financial assistance available, if direly needed, during four months of the transition period after separation from the chaplaincy. A written request must be made to this office for the aid and it is very meager: \$300.00 per month.

The Roman Catholic community has initiated some new efforts which will embellish the process of transition. Reverend Monsignor J. T. Dimino, Chancellor, Military Vicariate, indicates,

Currently we are in the process of identifying all Catholic priests in the United States who have served as military chaplains since the beginning of World War Two. So far we have contacted over 3,000 former/retired chaplains and are now requesting each one to complete a survey sheet . . . . Also we are presently working with the Department of Aging at Catholic University in the hopes of designing a "transition" program for Catholic chaplains who are returning to ministry in a civilian setting. For many years it has been our policy, when notified by the Office of the Chief of Chaplains or other source that a Catholic chaplain is soon to depart military service, to write to his Bishop or Religious Superior in order to provide assistance in the transition back to the Diocese or Religious Order.

Reverend Orris E. Kelly, Associate General Secretary, Division of Chaplains and Related Ministries, The United Methodist Church, indicates that a task force was formed in January of 1980 to anticipate some of the problems associated with transition:

The concern of the Task Force is the developing of a process through which the Division will be able to respond appropriately to persons in times of transition. . . . The purpose of this relationship during transition is to assist individuals to make changes in ministry, career direction, life patterns or life style. . . . The Task Force identifies and recognizes two categories of transition: professional and personal. . . . During any professional or personal transition the Division should

maintain on-going communications and coordination with the individuals concerned, as well as provide liaison, as required, with the Bishop of the annual conference involved and the appropriate committees thereof. . . . The focus of the transition process is pastoral and supportive. The purpose of the transition process is to be available and assist the individual to deal positively with change, using every resource possible.  
(Quoted from Task Force Document as provided by Rev Kelly)

Reverend Reuben A. Sheares, II, Executive Director  
for Church Life and Leadership, United Church of Christ,  
shares with us some good thinking and mutual responsibilities  
of both church and chaplains,

The fact that "Ordained Ministerial Standing" is held in an Association means that chaplains are encouraged to maintain their ties and relationship to the Church (through their Association and/or Conference), as would be the case with every other ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. . . . What this means is that, when a chaplain is transitioning from the military to civilian ministry, the chaplain can receive the advice, counsel and assistance needed through the regular placement procedures of the Church. Placement in the United Church of Christ is through a "call" system, as each local church (or other bodies for that matter) calls its own pastor. That process is aided and abetted by Conference staff persons (Placement Officers) who work with both churches and ordained ministers in filling positions. Nationally, our office plays a role by assembling and distributing profiles on ordained ministers for use in the placement system.

It is significant that well over one-third of the active force is composed of chaplains who represent denominations/churches who use the "call" system to obtain a pastor. In other words, local congregations are directly and exclusively involved in the process. My suspicion is that not all church groups who practice this policy have a data bank of "soon-to-retire" chaplains nor is there a listing of "pastorless" churches.

Various endorsers are involved in the process of helping chaplains get in contact with local congregations. Reverend Jack A. Henry, Executive Vice-President, Baptist Bible College East, says,

Because our chaplains endorsing agent is also our Director of Missions, and because he is out every week in churches across the nation, he has a personal and current knowledge of the needs of churches throughout the country. With that knowledge, he will be able to help retiring chaplains get in contact with congregations who can use their services.

Several religious groups do have a placement service available and find this to be quite helpful in assisting chaplains. Reverend D. L. Meschke, Chairman, Commission on Military Chaplains, Independent Fundamental Churches of America, writes,

The IFCA does have a placement service available to its membership whereby it seeks to help men find a place of service and at the same time help churches find the right man to take pastoral leadership in the local church. This service is open to our military chaplains. Those desiring this service are encouraged to give the IFCA their resume which would then be sent to inquiring churches. (See Appendix B.)

Jon G. Harder, Manager, Christian Science Activities for Armed Services Personnel, shares an interesting view when he says,

Because our church does not consider the chaplaincy to be a career in itself, we build into our training for prospective chaplains the broadest possible sense of ministry to humanity. This helps our chaplains make the transition from the military to civilian life.

Of all the samples shared from the endorsers, the Episcopal Church provides the most detailed. From the Church

Deployment Office of the Episcopal Church, a complete packet is made available to Episcopal clergy. Services include but are not limited to five specific areas of help. (See Appendix C.)

In conclusion, based on the response to my inquiry, most endorsers are genuinely interested in helping chaplains (or other clergy for that matter) to locate or relocate to parish ministries as well as to other specialized ministries in their communion. That effort works only IF the chaplain takes some initiative to "let the endorsers know" of retirement plans and desires for help.

Lacking in the military retirement/transitioning process is a time for reflective sharing, listening to the dreams, aspirations, hopes and feelings of "being alone," "unwanted" or perhaps "stereotyped." Oh, yes, several endorsers indicate they talk with the retiring chaplains. It is my conviction that more must be done.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I shall not be presumptuous in assuming that a study of this limited nature suddenly gives me omnipotent understanding and prophetic perfection for conclusions or recommendations. One primary reason for letting the chaplains speak for themselves and letting the endorsers do likewise is to let each reader draw his/her own conclusions. So I shall draw my own.

First, the Chaplain Corps, both active and retired, has an amazing spirit about it all. It has been personally gratifying and spiritually uplifting to read time and time again how that chaplains feel God has called them in and through the various church organizations to be something, to do something and to feel good about that calling. It is with confidence that I say, the Air Force chaplaincy is healthy, alive and being faithful to the calling from above in order to faithfully minister to men and women in the uniform.

Second, chaplains do have certain expectation from the endorsers/religious orders in terms of future work after military termination. Several chaplains are not at all sure any help will be coming. Why do they feel this way? I don't know and only recommend that both chaplains and endorsers give some long hard looks at the communication between themselves and let each ask the other some candid questions on

this matter. If a chaplain is expecting more than the particular denomination is able to give, then he/she deserves to know that--early on in the career.

Third, chaplains in some cases, have no one to blame but themselves. As one put it: "Be your own man." Another said, "Look out for yourself." It is ingrained in the Air Force officer from day one that YOU are responsible for your personnel records. If a chaplain spends 25 years active duty and seldom contacts his endorsing office (via visit, reports, phone calls, etc.) and if he/she never visits nor affiliates with the local congregation of his faith (when possible), then perhaps it is really expecting too much at the end of the career to suddenly look up and see the religious community, i.e., endorser, waiting with open arms.

On the other hand, there were too many comments from honest, hardworking, church-attending, sincere and truthful chaplains which indicated they have had a very disappointing relationship with the endorsing body in their faith community. What then might we do better?

Let's start from the top. In the military community, first the Office of the Chief of Chaplains might consider advising each denomination/endorser as soon as the personnel system "knows" that a particular chaplain will be retiring. Several endorsers indicated they learned of a chaplain's retirement by happen-chance, "a friend told" them. Second, the Chief's office could encourage all endorsing agents to share in a cross-feed manner all the things that each

is already doing. Perhaps there is already in existence some mode whereby this is being done, but there does not appear to be that kind of cross-feed on this subject. Third, the Chief's office should in conjunction with the USAF Chaplains School coordinate and include in the Career Course curriculum a two- or three-day block that deals with long-range planning for retirement/transitioning.

Recommended content for those three days might be as follows:

(1) A competent financial whiz who knows and understands IRA's income taxes, and money market investments, and land and investments.

(2) USAF personnel office with representative who discusses the military aspects of retirement.

(3) Representatives (the endorsers, if possible) from at least five denominations, i.e., Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist and United Methodists. These religious leaders should have a full day with the troops in order to get a feel for expectations and hopes for the future. Vice versa, the chaplains will also need to know some of the genuine concern and practical roadblocks which some endorsers face.

(4) The Chief's office should consider sponsoring a CDI (Career Development Institute) to be made available to chaplains who have at least 17 years active duty. Recommend content of such a CDI would be the same as at the Career Course with the additional items:

(a) Invite four or five retired chaplains (varying in length of years retired and a denominational mix) who can tell it like it was and is. Why is this important? The active duty chaplains indicated by a 70 percent margin that they expected to go back to the local parish on the occasion of their retirement. On the other hand, the retired chaplains indicated by a 55 percent mark that they were in a "full-time ministry-related" field. What happens to the dream of pastor expectations? I did not ask the retired force to specify how many of that full-time ministry-related work was actually in a local parish.

(b) There are well-trained and highly qualified psychologists/psychiatrists who might well have a lot to say to the chaplain who is soon to retire. This resource person should be someone who understands the uniqueness of the clergy profession and the realities that some chaplains feel extremely left out and lonely on the occasion of transition back to the "real world."

In the religious community, many agencies are doing well. They pattern their help along church policy lines, and that is good. For those church groups who do have a bishop/conference placement relationship with its clergy, I would suggest soliciting directly from their chaplains' inputs, ideas they might have as to what the expectations might be. The key thing in both the endorser's role and that of the chaplains to the endorser is "STAY IN CONTACT" with each other. Ways and means of doing that are obvious.



For those religious groups that have the "call" system to obtain a new pastor, my recommendations are as follows:

(1) Working through your conferences, associations, conventions, and meetings of boards and leadership, inform the "civilian" portion of your religious group that chaplains are superiorly qualified, for the most part, to do the work of ministry--in every sense of the word. Religious boards and endorsers do not imply that chaplains are so qualified when they only offer them "chaplaincy" jobs or give their names to institutions who will have chaplaincy job available in the near future. The point is ministry in the military is no different from ministry in the civilian sector--only the props are different. Local churches need to know and understand that their chaplain is not out of the ministry; he is a minister in uniform who is doing a significant task that he feels God has called him to do.

(2) Several church groups have done very well with data processing of skills inquiry forms for their clergy. Chaplains, by their own testimony in this research, have exceptional qualities in administration, organization, planning, budgeting, music, etc. When a chaplain notifies his endorser, such data could be processed and made available to the local endorsing office. Churches must then be informed that Chaplain so and so from the state of "X" will soon be retiring. Pulpit committees, selection committees, etc., might help the military pastor return to the civilian parish in a position somewhat compatible with his military position.

In conclusion, let it be said of the chaplaincy that it is a valid arm of the church which reaches from the pulpit to the fox hole, from the cock pit to the hospital, from the remote site to the battle field. The chaplaincy represents the best of the best who are about the business they feel God called them. Likewise, the religious communities that endorse the chaplain to military duty is a part of the process as an integral part of this extension of the believing community to the men and women in uniform. "The chaplaincy is a caring, holy calling: an unselfish devotion to God, man and country; a life of activity, challenge, inspiration and healing."<sup>15</sup>

The call to serve propels many chaplains to stay on active duty for at least 20 years or more. These ministers in uniform are about the business of bringing God to people and people to God. They also dream. They dream of a day of "rest"; i.e., transitioning from one preaching place to another, from one chaplaincy job to another--from the military parish back to the civilian parish.

Dilemmas are few in number but they are there and need to be addressed. Opportunities to minister, to spread the word, to share the sacraments, to be what God called them to be is all they ask. . . may their dream come true.

COMMITTEE  
TO STUDY PLACEMENT NEEDS  
OF RETIRING CHAPLAINS

In 1963 and 1977-78 the Commission on Chaplains of the Assemblies of God appointed a committee to make a study of retired chaplains (1) to learn in what ministries they are engaged and their reactions to the transition from military to civilian ministry, helps they received from denominational leaders at national and district level, and suggestions regarding how the national offices can help; (2) to survey mid-career and near-retirement chaplains to learn what their goals were and suggestions on how we could assist them; and (3) to survey district officials and college officials about possible future openings in their areas of responsibility for retiring chaplains.

Responses from the survey were tabulated and organized for study. These results and other resources were studied and recommendations made. As a result from both the 1963 and 1977-78 studies, it was determined that:

1. The office of the chairman of the Commission on Chaplains for the Assemblies of God would be the primary office to assist and/or refer retiring or separating chaplains.
2. Chaplains would be encouraged to become involved in the districts, local churches, and Assemblies of God colleges in the areas they are assigned so far as military duties permit. Thus they will be known to some who have responsibility for filling many ministry openings.
3. A file will be maintained on all retired/separated chaplains with current addresses, phone numbers, and type of ministry in which they are now engaged.
4. Retired chaplains are to be invited to speak at chaplains conferences to tell how they made the transition and pitfalls to be avoided.
5. Chaplains are to be encouraged to provide the Commission with resumes up to two years before retirement/release from active duty. Resumes in addition to areas of experience and expertise should include geographical and ministry areas preferred.
6. Resumes and a letter are to be sent by the chairman of the Commission on Chaplains to the appropriate district and/or college officials.
7. Chaplains were to be encouraged to understand that especially due to our church polity they must assume primary responsibility as do all other ministers in our Fellowship to take the initiative in seeking and pursuing possible openings for ministry. They will be assisted wholeheartedly by the above described means. They must make themselves known by involvement, contacts, letters, and the best possible resume.

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If you  
have a small  
picture, please  
paste here.

If not,  
attach larger  
photo.

(Type or Print Plainly)

Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check here if student

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

2. Complete Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your present Christian work? \_\_\_\_\_

4. If pastor give name of church \_\_\_\_\_

5. Pastorates served: Give names of the most recent churches served, dates of service, and reasons for leaving:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Training: School Name

High School \_\_\_\_\_ Year Graduated \_\_\_\_\_ (or yrs. att.)

College \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ " " "

Bible School \_\_\_\_\_ Diploma \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ " " "

Seminary \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ " " "

Other Training \_\_\_\_\_

Music: Do you conduct? \_\_\_\_\_ Train choirs? \_\_\_\_\_

Sing? \_\_\_\_\_ Play an instrument? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Experience:

Writing for publications? \_\_\_\_\_

Radio broadcasting? \_\_\_\_\_

Other Experience? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Does your wife assist? (In what manner) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Give names and ages of children \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Check here if further information is provided on reverse side.

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- 5 - A computerized Search of the positions listed in the Positions Open Bulletin to identify which positions most closely match one's skills and experiences. Use the form on the back of the Positions Open Bulletin.

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6/82

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